

Message Text

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SUBJ: PARTICIPATION IN NATO AWACS PROGRAM

REF: A. EMBASSY BONN 18779 DTG 172047Z NOV 75

B. STATE 268529 DTG 122335Z NOV 75

C. STATE 248678 DTG 201655Z OCT 75

SUMMARY: US POSITION ON NATO AWACS SEEMS TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF FRG AND UK SUPPORT FOR NEAR TERM WHILE ALLOWING AMBIGUITY IN WHETHER AND HOW FRANCE AND SMALLER NATIONS WILL PARTICIPATE. HOWEVER, FRG SUPPORT MAY DEPEND UPON MORE PARTICIPATION BY SMALLER COUNTRIES. RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM, IN TURN, MAY REQUIRE HIGH LEVEL US BILATERAL DEMARCHES WITH INDIVIDUAL SMALLER NATIONS TO SECURE COMMITMENT TO SOME KIND OF PARTICIPATION. END SUMMARY.

1. KEY NATO NATIONS SEEM TO BE PURSUING DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO AWACS. UNLESS THESE DIFFERING APPROACHES ARE RECONCILED, IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN SUFFICIENT CONSENSUS ON AWACS TO PERMIT PARTICIPATION ON A BASIS DOMESTICALLY ACCEPTABLE TO MAJOR NATIONS. WE THINK THAT ADEQUATE BASIS FOR RECONCILIATION EXISTS, BUT THAT PASSAGE OF TIME CONFIDENTIAL

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WILL WORK AGAINST SUCH RESOLUTION.

2. WE INFER THAT WASHINGTON REGARDS FRG PARTICIPATION AS A NECESSARY AND, ALONG WITH THE UK, PERHAPS A SUFFICIENT

CONDITION TO AWACS VIABILITY -- BOTH IN TERMS OF ADEQUATE FUNDING AND THE CREATION OF SUFFICIENT "NATO PARTICIPATION" TO MAKE AWACS ACCEPTABLE TO CONGRESS. BUT WE SEE INCREASING EVIDENCE THAT THE FRG BELIEVES THAT AWACS MUST BE MORE TRULY A "NATO PROGRAM" AS A PRIOR CONDITION FOR FRG DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION. IF WE REGARD UK PARTICIPATION AS REASONABLY ASSURED IN EITHER A TRILATERAL (US-UK-FRG) OR BROADER MULTILATERAL EFFORT, AND IF WE ACCEPT CONTINUED AMBIGUITY ON THE PART OF FRANCE, AS IT APPEARS WE MUST, IT THEN SEEMS PROBABLY THAT FRG ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NECESSITY FOR PARTICIPATION BY SOME NUMBR OF SMALL COUNTRIES WILL BECOME THE PACING FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT OF A VIABLE PROGRAM.

3. ALTHOUGH THE MILITARY COMMITTEE (MC) HAS ENDORSED AWACS IN STRONG TERMS AS A MILITARY REQUIREMENT, AND ALTHOUGH THE ALLIES ARE GRADUALLY BUT SATISFACTORILY DIGESTING THE BROADER TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF THE SYSTEM, THE MC HAS UNDERSTANDABLY BEEN RELUCTANT TO SPECIFY WHICH ON-GOING OR PLANNED MILITARY PROGRAMS MIGHT APPROPRIATELY BE DEFERRED OR CANCELLED IN FAVOR OF AWACS. GIVEN THE HIGH COST OF AWACS AT ANY PROCUREMENT AND OPERATING LEVEL UNDER CURRENT DISCUSSION, THIS IS A KEY FACTOR TO NATO'S SMALLER NATIONS. SIX OF THEM HAVE ALREADY DECLARED THAT THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE BECAUSE THEY CANNOT DO SO WITHOUT DELAYING OR CANCELLING HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAMS FOR WHICH AT LEAST SOME DEGREE OF INTERNAL CONSENSUS ALREADY EXISTS. THEY ARE: BELGIUM, DENAMRK, THE NETHERLANDS, PORTUGAL, ITALY, AND NORWAY.

4. ASSUMING THAT AWACS DISCUSSION AT FORTHCOMING DPC MINISTRIALS CONTINUES THIS "HOLDING PATTERN" WITHOUT FURTHER NEGATIVE INDICATIONS OF INTENT, WE BELIEVE IT WILL THEN BE NECESSARY TO ASK OURSELVES WHAT KIND OR LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION BY SMALLER NATIONS IS FEASIBLE AND WHAT KIND OF APPROACH AND INDUCEMENTS COULD BEST PRODUCE THIS PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH SMALLER NATIONS HAVE STATED THAT THEY CANNOT, OR WILL NOT, PARTICIPATE IN AWACWS PROCUREMENT, THEY HAVE NOT YET STATED THAT THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN APPROPRIATE WAYS IN ASSOCIATED
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GROUND ENVIRONMENT INTERFACES AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, IN OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) COSTS. INDEED, NO CONCERTED EFFORT HAS YET BEEN MADE TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE O&M SHARING.

5. AGREEMENT TO PROCURE AWACS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT SUFFICIENT PARTICIPATION AT SOME POINT BY SMALLER NATIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST THE GENERAL LEVEL AND NATURE OF THIS PARTICIPATION NEEDS TO BE AGREED SOON, IF NOT BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY FOR AN INITIAL DECISION THEN BECAUSE THE PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING IT WILL WANE OR DISAPPEAR AFTER THE MAJOR ALLIES COMMIT THEMSELVES TO AWACS PROCUREMENT. IT WOULD SEEM INCREDIBLE TO SMALLER NATIONS THAT HAD NOT ALREADY AGREED TO

LATER PARTICIPATION IN O&M COSTS THAT THERE WAS ANY NEED FOR THEM TO DO SO AFTER A PROCUREMENT DECISION WAS MADE, FOR THEY WILL BELIEVE A PROCUREMENT DECISION CARRIES WITH IT THE WILLINGNESS TO OPERATE AWACS. THUS, WE ARE FACED WITH THE PARADOX THAT NATIONS THAT DO NOT AGREE SOON TO BUY SOME KIND OF TICKET ARE INSURED OF A FREE RIDE IF THE PLANE FLIES -- ALTHOUGH THEIR ABSTENTION MAKES IT QUESTIONABLE THAT IT WILL FLY.

6. THE NATO EARLY WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM PROGRAM OFFICE HAS RAISED THE SUBJECT OF SMALLER NATION PARTICIPATION IN GROUND INTERFACE MODIFICATIONS AND OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE COSTS IN THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP (AC/259(HLG)WP/6). HOWEVER, WE DOUBT THAT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE CAN BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN EITHER THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP OR CNAD WITHIN THE TIME REMAINING. IT SEEMS TO US HERE THAT IT WILL TAKE HIGH LEVEL BILATERAL DEMARCHES WITH THE INDIVIDUAL SMALL NATIONS CONCERNED TO SECURE THE DESIRED DEGREE OF COMMITMENT TO DEFERRED PARTICIPATION. BRUCE

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